Hurdles in import and export

3053. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that a report, co-sponsored by the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation, has ranked India at 116th place, thus highlighting significant obstacles, including administrative hurdles to import and export, and delays and costs to register property in India, and that an entrepreneur had to submit 15 documents and get 27 signatures to import goods;

(b) if so, are these views reflective of actual happenings or are based on surmises; and

(c) what steps Government proposes to take with a view to improve our ranking even when Bangladesh and Pakistan rank 65th and 60th in the report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) to (b) Government is aware that India has been placed at 116th rank in terms of 'ease of doing business' as per the report submitted by the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation. Having a lower ranking is not directly indicative of a non conducive business environment.

(c) Government is taking steps to simplify procedures including benchmarking of service levels, electronic governance etc. So as to reduce transaction costs and thereby facilitate international trade. Introduction of the facility of online filing of applications for import Licences and online filing of import documents at Customs through ICEGATE would help in expeditious clearance of cargo. Phased introduction of a Risk Management System (RMS) and Accredited Client Program (ACP) has also been put in place for better accountability and transparent decision making based on structured and scientific risk analysis.

Import of Iron Scrap

3054. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDSUTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether over ten thousand metric tonnes of iron scrap is imported

in the country on a daily basis and in the last one year over 30 tonnes of live and fired shells were seized from these scraps;

(b) whether it is a fact that if these shells are not defused immediately, they can cause grave danger;

(c) if so, whether these shells have since been defused; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) to (d) The country requires 5 million tones of scrap for re-cycling and use by the steel industry, of which 2.5 million tones is imported every year. After an explosion on 30th September, 2004 in the premises of M/s. Bhushan Steel and Strips Ltd., Ghaziabad, live and spent shells were recovered/ found discarded in various parts of the country. On the basis of requests received from the concerned State Governments, NSG and Ministry of Defence were requested to provide the necessary assistance to them for diffusing these shells. In some cases, these shells have successfully been disposed off. In other cases, NSG / Army has requested these States to provide the necessary clearances, safe locations and explosives required for destroying the recovered shells.

Promoting export of processed food

†3055 PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of steps taken by Government to promote export of processed food and fruits from India during the last five years; and

(b) the details of the achievements made in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S.ELANGOVAN): (a) Measures taken by Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) to promote export of processed food and fruits include setting up centers for perishable cargo at airports and other infrastructure facilities, development of packaging standards, quality develpment,

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.